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STATISTICAL SUMMARY

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS, U. S. D. A.

A SS-16

FEBRUARY 29, 1944

BIG RESERVOIR OF FOOD ON THE HOOF

One of the chief ways in which grain and forage crops are stored and carried along in this country is in the form of livestock. We have had 6 years of abundant crops, a fact now reflected in an all-time large inventory of meat stored on the hoof. On January 1 number of hogs, cattle and poultry had reached a new peak; only sheep decreased last year. In terms of comparable animal units, based upon feed consumption, total livestock numbers at the beginning of this year, excluding poultry, stood 3 percent above a year earlier and 15 percent above the ten year average (1933-42). Of grain consuming animals the increase over a year ago was about 7 percent, and of hay and pasture consumers about 1-1/2 percent. By the end of 1943 livestock numbers had finally overtaken feed supplies and much of the accumulation of feed grains had been used up. What happens to our herds and flocks from now on depends upon new feed supplies as well as relative prices.

RECORD NUMBER CATTLE

Estimated number of cattle and calves on farms and ranches, at beginning of this year, 82,192,000, an increase of 3 million head or 4 percent over previous record number a year earlier. Cattle numbers tend to move in a long cycle; present peak is nearly 8 million head above 1934, which was peak of the previous cycle. It is over 9 million head above 1918, which was peak of World War I cycle. For first time in 20 years number of milk stock is below that of other cattle. Latter 41,324,000; milk stock 40,868,000.

RECORD NUMBER MILK COWS

Number milk cows January 1 was 27,607,000, an increase of 501,000 or about 2 percent over year previous. Present number is a record high. Number of yearling heifers being kept for milk cows increased from 5,998,000 to 6,222,000 and the number of heifer calves being saved for milk cows from 6,929,000 to 7,039,000. Present record numbers of heifers and calves indicate continued large herds of dairy cows for a time.

HOGS

Following the record pig crop of 1943, number of hogs on farms January 1, 1944 rose to 83,756,000 head. However, indications for sharp decrease in 1944 spring pig crop suggest falling off in hog slaughter toward end of this year.

FEWER SHEEP

Number of sheep on farms and ranches dropped sharply last year; total sheep and lambs January 1 estimated 51,718,000, a drop of about 7 percent. Stock sheep declined from 48,796,000 to 45,777,000. Sheep and lambs on feed decreased from 6,979,000 to 5,941,000.

RECORD NUMBER OF CHICKENS

Number chickens on farms January 1 totalled 572,460,000, excluding commercial broilers. This is largest number of all time, up 6 percent from year ago and 35 percent above 10 year average (1933-42). Farm flocks this January were made up of 60 percent pullets, 30 percent hens and 10 percent other chickens; like figures year earlier 59 percent pullets, 31 percent hens and 10 percent other chickens.

MORE TURKEYS

Number turkeys on farms January 1 was 7,520,000. Was 12 percent above year ago and 13 percent above 10 year average. Larger number of turkeys on farms this January was due more to feed scarcity and slow maturity than to 1943 crop, which was about like 1942.

THE VANISHING HORSE

Total number of horses and colts on farms January 1 was 9,330,000, down 345,000 head or 4 percent from previous year. Number of colts under 1 year old was about 7 percent under last year and is smallest in 25 years of record. Some states now have the smallest number of horses in a century.

FEWER MULES ALSO

Number of mules dropped 4 percent last year, from 3,704,000 to 3,559,000. Number of mule colts under 1 year old down about 12 percent. Mule prices, however, have increased sharply in the south; average value per head this January \$143 compared with \$127 a year ago. This is in contrast to value of horses which declined slightly last year.

FARM STOCK STILL SHOWS HIGH INVENTORY VALUE

The total farm values of the various categories of livestock, inventoried as of January 1, 1944, were: horses \$734 million, mules \$510 million, cattle \$5,648 million, (milk cows alone \$2,816 million), sheep \$451 million, hogs \$1,472 million, chickens \$671 million, turkeys \$40 million. The total farm value of farm livestock in the U. S. January 1, 1944

PARITY PRICES FOR FARM PRODUCTS AND ACTUAL PRICES RECEIVED

COMMODITY AND UNIT	ACTUAL PRICE		PARITY PRICE
	JAN. 15 1944	FEB. 15 1944	FEB. 15 1944
Wheat, bu. dol.	1.46	1.46	1.50
Corn, bu. dol.	1.13	1.13	1.09
Oats, bu. dol.	.775	.786	.678
Cotton, lb. ct.	20.15	19.93	21.08
Potatoes, bu. dol.	1.41	1.39	1.22
Hogs, 100 lb. dol.	12.80	12.90	12.40
Beef cattle, 100 lb. . . dol.	11.40	11.80	9.21
Veal calves, 100 lb. . . dol.	12.70	13.10	11.50
Lambs, 100 lb. dol.	12.50	13.20	10.00
Butterfat, lb. ct.	50.8	50.9	45.8
Milk, wholesale, 100 lb. . dol.	3.37	3.33	2.79
Chickens, live, lb. . . . ct.	23.9	23.7	19.4
Eggs, doz. ct.	34.6	31.9	31.8

¹Adjusted for seasonal variation.

was \$9.5 billion. This compared with a value of \$9.5 billion at the beginning of 1943; of \$7 billion in 1942; and \$4.7 billion as the average of the 10 years 1933-42.

COTTON CONSUMPTION OFF

Our mills are using less cotton. Consumption in December was 852,016 bales, compared with nearly 936,000 in December 1942. For the 5 months August-December 1943 consumption totalled 4,271,407 bales, compared with 4,706,523 bales used in like months of 1942. On a daily basis, consumption for the 5 months declined from 44,089 per working day in the 1942 period to 39,277 per day in latter part of 1943. If the annual rate of consumption be figured, based upon what was used in the 5 months, the drop was from 11,246,000 bales down to 10,117,000, a decline of 10 percent.

MORE COWS BUT LESS MILK

The average number of milk cows on farms last year (1943) was 25.7 million, up 2 percent over the 25.2 million of the previous year. Despite this increase in cows, they gave an average of only 4,604 pounds of milk per cow last year, as against 4,738 pounds in 1942. The upshot of this was that total milk production in 1943 was 118.1 billion pounds, compared with 119-1/4 billion in 1942, a drop of about 1 percent. The main reasons for the decline in milk output were a poor pasture season, local scarcity and rising cost of feed, and a declining proportion of milk cows kept in production. The real shrinkage came in the latter part of the year as pastures in many parts of the country dried up.

The leading States last year in milk production were, in order: Wisconsin 14.3 billion pounds, Minnesota 8.9 billion, New York 7.8 billion, Iowa 7.1 billion, Illinois 5.4 billion, Michigan 5.3 billion, California 5.2 billion pounds.

LESS HIRED HELP THAN YEAR AGO

Farm work ordinarily begins to liven up in the central and southern regions soon after the first of the year; this accounts for the increase of about 180,000 in farm employment shown February 1 over month previous. Total number farm workers that date 8,383,000, slightly higher than a year before. Over half of the January

increase in workers was hired help- about 100,000 hands taken on during the month. Number of hired workers this February 1 was 1,681,000, but this was still 50,000 fewer than year ago. Number of family workers on farms 6,702,000, up 80,000 from January 1 and about 65,000 more than year ago.

Number of foreign workers on farms or available for farm work, as of January 29, was reported as follows: Mexicans 13,489, Bahamians 3,524, Jamaicans 2,142. The bulk of these were in California, Florida, and Arizona.

Farm wages for the year 1943, per day without board, averaged highest, \$7.15 per day, in Washington State; were \$4.69 in Iowa; lowest average \$1.90 in Alabama. The 1943 average farm wage for the whole United States was \$3.27 per day without board; per month without board the average farm wage was \$72.85.

FARM INCOME UP

Total income from farm products sold during December, including Government payments, \$1,741 million, compared with \$1,573 million in December 1942. Government payments in December \$49 million, compared with \$74 million year previous.

For the 12 months of 1943, total income was \$19,678 million, which included \$669 million Government payments. Comparable figure for 1942 was \$16,063 million, which included \$697 million Government payments.

CURRENT INDEXES FOR AGRICULTURE		
INDEX NUMBERS	BASE PERIOD	FEBRUARY 1944
Prices received by farmers . . .	1910-14 = 100	195
Prices paid by farmers, interest and taxes	1910-14 = 100	170
Parity ratio	1910-14 = 100	115
Wholesale prices of food . . .	1910-14 = 100	161
Retail prices of food	1910-14 = 100	¹ 177
Farm wage rates	1910-14 = 100	¹ 275
Weekly factory earnings . . .	1910-14 = 100	² 404
RATIOS	LONG-TIME FEB.-AVERAGE	FEBRUARY 1944
Hog-corn ratio, U. S.	12.2	11.4
Butterfat-feed ratio, U. S. . .	24.8	23.6
Milk-feed ratio, U. S.	1.27	1.36
Egg-feed ratio, U. S.	16.6	14.1
PRODUCTION COMPARISONS	JAN.-DEC. 1942	JAN.-DEC. 1943
Milk, (Bil. lb.)	119	118
Eggs, (Bil.)	48	54
Beef, (Dr. wt., mil. lb.) . . .	6,347	5,970
Lamb & Mutton (Dr. wt., mil. lb.)	880	958
Pork & Lard (Mil. lb.)	9,927	12,161

¹January figure.

²Factory pay roll per employed worker adjusted for seasonal variation. December figure.

MARKETING CHARGES SOMEWHAT HIGHER

The marketing margin for the family food basket (spread between retail cost and payment to farmers) rose \$3, from \$182 in December 1943 to \$185 in January 1944, while the farmer's share of the retail food dollar dropped from the recent record high of 59 cents in December to 58 cents in January.

Retail cost of the food basket in January was \$440, unchanged for the fourth consecutive month. Payments to farmers, for equivalent produce, of \$255 in January showed a decline of over 1 percent from \$258 in December.

For more detailed information, write the Division of Economic Information, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C., or telephone Republic 4142-Branch 4407.